

# Lighten Up

## Opening:

Before we begin the story, let's get comfortable. The first thing you need to do is to become relaxed. As you are sitting in your chair, think about your body and make adjustments so that your body feels at ease. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor. If your shirt is bunched up, fix it, so you are nice and comfy.

Now put your hands on your stomach just below your bellybutton. Then with deep slow breaths; try to make your stomach rise and lower. Breathe in one, two, three... and breathe out one, two, three... nice and slow. Now close your eyes and continue breathing slowly. It is okay to lay your head down on the desk if that is comfortable, but just keep breathing deeply. (pause) Feel your body sinking into the chair. Your body feels heavy and relaxed. Now in your mind, let my words form pictures. Do not try too hard. Just relax and listen to the words.

After walking thru the orange door you head straight for Gene. As soon as he sees you he starts to smile and wave. You run over to him and give him a bear hug. He laughs because you are squeezing him so hard. Gene makes a silly face. You laugh out loud at how funny he looks as you let him go.

When you are done laughing together, Gene asked you where you want to go today. You tell him you don't know. He thinks a minute and says, "I know a very special place." He reaches into his vest pocket and brings out a very large coin and hands it to you. The coin is heavy and has a picture of a balloon on it. He tells you to take it around the side of the castle to the pink candy store. You thank him and start to head out. Gene says "Hey, aren't you forgetting something. You need to lighten up." And he points to your *coat of cares*. You shrug out of your coat and hand it to him. He smiles and declares, "Now you are ready." As you walk around the corner you wave good-bye.

While you are walking, you are enjoying two things, the sound of your shoes on the brick sidewalk, and the feel of your body as it is moving along. It is a relaxed walk... clip, clop, clip, clop. Up ahead you see the store. It is bright pink with a sign that says "Pinks Candy Store." Your steps speed up as you start to get excited. When you open the door a bell sounds to let the sales person know someone has come in. He is busy wrapping a box, so you look around. The inside of the store is all golden with touches of pink.

(Optional Section in gray) The walls, floor, and ceiling are gold and the little curtains are pink. The glass case is filled with bright-colored



candies that make your mouth start to water. When you go to touch the glass it is soft like plastic wrap and as you reach for one for the candies your hand is wrapped in plastic. Cool! So you pick up the candy one at a time and look at it. You think of all the candy you want to buy with the balloon coin.

When you look up, a merry little man is standing behind the counter. He is not much taller than you and he has sparkly eyes with a great big smile. His outfit sparkles, too. He has on a gold shiny hat and apron with a bright pink shirt underneath. He looks as good as his candy.

In a bright, chipper voice he sings, "Good life to you! How can I help you make it more fun?" You guess that means- how can I help you?- so you hand him the coin you tell him that Gene has sent you. His face lights up even more. He says his name is Pinks and that you are in for a treat.

He goes to the back and brings out one piece of candy wrapped in a pink shiny wrapper. "It's Lighten Up candy," the happy little man says with a grin. You look at all the candy in the store and think "only one piece." Pinks smiles and tells you he will give you some candy to take with you.

He leads you outside and hands you the one piece of pink candy. You take off the wrapper and put into your mouth. It tastes like the best candy you have ever had. (pause) You are enjoying chewing it when all of the sudden it starts to grow in your mouth. It is getting bigger and bigger. You don't know what to do. You wonder, "Should I spit it out," but it tastes so good. Pinks tells you to blow a bubble. You try and it easily blows into a balloon size bubble. Pink ties the balloon off with a gold sting and you take it out of you mouth. When he hands you the string you start to raise.

Before you are too far off the ground, Pinks hands you a small box that is wrapped in gold paper. The box has a pour spout on one end. He tells you he put all his favorite candies in the gold box and to enjoy the ride.

As you start to rise up, you notice that it is raising your whole body at once so nothing is pulling or hurting you. When you look down you realize you are getting higher than the trees. You start to get scared and think about going down and the balloon starts to go down. Then you think about going to Gene and the balloon starts to head that way. Wow, you can control the balloon with your thoughts! Nice! As you get over top of Gene, he smiles and waves. Gene points to the gold box and asked you to drop him a candy so you pour out a few. Gene has no problem catching them and he yells 'thanks' as he pops one into his mouth. You pour a few in your mouth and they taste great. Pinks picked your favorite flavor. (pause)



At first you go exploring, just looking around at everything below you... the playground, the orange door, the school and the castle. (long pause) Then you remember you have control of the balloon and you think, "go higher." The balloon starts to rise. "Go faster," you think, and it rises up at lightening speed. Your belly button feels funny so you say, "Stop," and it stops. You think, "Float down," and the balloon floats like a feather, down... down ...down.

As your feet touch the ground, the balloon starts to deflate. It floats all the way to the ground and you pick it up. It is not sticky so you fold it up and put it in you pocket. Maybe you can use it again later. You landed right by the orange door so it must be time to go. You start walking towards it and smile. Man that was fun!

#### Closing:

Now I want you to put your hands back on your stomach below your bellybutton and take a deep breath in one, two, three... and out one, two, three. Raise your shoulders up towards your ears, hold it a second and release them slowly back down. Now slowly open your eyes and give your lap a gentle pat... pat...with both hands.

#### Discussion Helpers: (authentic discussion is recommended)

1. What did it feel like to squeeze Gene in a bear hug?
2. Explain what the balloon coin looked and felt like.
3. Describe what you sensed while walking to the candy store.
4. What did you think of Pinks?
5. When you put the special Lighten Up candy in your mouth what flavor was it?
6. What flavor was the candy in the gold box?
7. How did it feel to be floating around?
8. Will you come and visit on your own?

Transfer to Reading: Explain again that during reading good readers use their sense images while reading in their mind. Ask if anyone remembers while they were reading- seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling or hearing any part of the story or text. Give or ask for examples.